

UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

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Saturday, October 12, 2024

Lecturer Pay

From [Patch](#) newspapers: *A UCLA professor of astrophysics made headlines this week after releasing a TikTok video stating his low salary has rendered him homeless. Dr. Daniel McKeown asked his supporters to raise awareness about his salary and to lobby the school for change. In the video, McKeown said he earns \$70,000 — not enough to afford an apartment in the affluent neighborhood surrounding UCLA. According to rental market research firm Zumper.com, the median rent in Westwood is \$4,200, 111 percent higher than the national average.*

"Hi everyone, my name is Daniel, and I'm an astrophysics professor at UCLA. I'm only being paid \$70,000 for this academic year to be a full-time professor, and the rent in Los Angeles is incredibly expensive," McKeown says in the video...

Full story at <https://patch.com/california/santamonica/s/izxug/ucla-astrophysics-professor-claims-low-pay-left-him-homeless>.

Other news media have picked up the story. I checked the UCLA directory this morning and it does not list a Daniel McKeown, nor does the Astrophysics Dept. list him. (The fact that the Internet Archive is down due to hacking - see earlier posts on this blog - meant that I could not use the WayBack Machine to explore his work history at UCLA more fully.) However, it appears he was a lecturer in the past, based on internet searching. Whether he will be employed again is unknown. A labor lawyer would likely have advised him to advocate for lecturers in general rather than just himself. A more collective complaint *might* have given him standing at PERB to complain about non-renewal of his contract, if that is what has occurred, in retaliation for concerted activity.

This episode does point to the increasing dependence of higher ed in general on what amount to temps, as oppose to better-paid ladder faculty, to teach undergraduates.

You can see the TikTok video below:



Or direct to <https://www.tiktok.com/@danielastrophysics/video/7420110866860805419>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:24 AM No comments:

Labels: [faculty pay](#), [UCLA](#)

In case you missed it...

Teresa Watanabe in the [LA Times](#) reported yesterday on campus policing and security under Rick Brazier:

On the one-year anniversary of Oct. 7, UCLA braced for potentially explosive protests as hundreds of people gathered on campus to mourn and rage over lives lost, hostages held, families destroyed and neighborhoods ravaged in the year since Hamas attacked southern Israel and Israel retaliated with a massive military assault on Gaza.

A tense moment came when pro-Palestinian supporters marched into a campus area off-limits to protest activities and initially refused to leave after student affairs staff told them they were violating campus rules.

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- [We Oppose AB-1418's Inadequate Protection from the Harms of Facial Recognition Tech](#)
- [We Oppose SB-1287's Restrictions on Protected Speech](#)

Remaking the University

- [Liner Note 9. BONFIRE OF THE KNOWLEDGES \(PART 4\): Interpretation as Counterpower - 12/31/2024](#)
- [MLA and BDS 3: Letter from Current and Former Members of the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities to MLA Executive Director and Executive Council on Blocking the Debate - 12/30/2024](#)
- [MLA and BDS 2: Letter from former members of the MLA Executive Council to Current Executive Council on Blocking the Debate - 12/29/2024](#)

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Police were called in. They determined protesters were not breaking any laws. The protesters moved on and the night ended with no arrests, no significant confrontations — and, in an intentional UCLA effort to create a calmer environment, no visible massive mobilization of police in riot gear wielding batons...

- **Staffing:** [Brazier] told *The Times* that he has hired outside consultants to do a deep dive into security staffing levels, based on such data as the number of calls and response times, to assess the optimal mix of civilians and sworn police officers needed to keep the campus safe. The work by Philadelphia-based Public Financial Management is part of a commission to set up the new Office of Campus Safety.
- **Protest response plan:** He has hired outside help to prepare a protest response plan for fall term and beyond. The consulting firm, 21CP Solutions, is also conducting the systemwide review of UCLA's actions during the melee and encampment takedown. That review was ordered by University of California President Michael V. Drake.
- **Training:** Brazier said he is aiming to expand training of police officers and university leaders, including state and federally required emergency management practices, which had lapsed in some cases. He also said better-trained civilian security officers might command higher pay but would allow UCLA to deploy fewer of them.
- **Communications:** He has hired Julie Parker Communications, a government and police crisis communication firm, to ramp up police messaging about campus events, such as protests, and introduce law enforcement forces to the public.
- **Relationships:** Brazier said he is working to strengthen relationships with external law enforcement agencies and city leaders, which were frayed during the spring stemming from UCLA's protest management. Several top LAPD leaders, for instance, told *The Times* that then-UCLA Police Chief John Thomas had tarnished the reputation of Los Angeles law enforcement with what they called his lack of planning and poor communication with them during the week of the melee and encampment takedown. Thomas, who has defended his actions, has been reassigned.
- **Integration:** Campus police and civilian security officers need to become part of the campus, he said. It's why he promoted the idea of UCLA-branded wear for civilian safety staff in the model of community policing that relies on strong relationships between security forces and those they serve...

[Brazier] declined to comment on why no university action was taken against pro-Palestinian students who refused to comply with protest rules on approved free speech zones and amplified-sound restrictions. He said police did not arrest anyone because protesters were not significantly disrupting campus operations, the trigger to declare an unlawful assembly and cite them if they refuse to leave.

...In an Oct. 6 video posted on social media, Officer Vanessa Alvarado urged the community in English and Spanish to attend commemoration events in a "responsible and safe manner" and pledged police commitment to safety. On Oct. 7, the department posted protest rules, and updates on traffic conditions around demonstrations, closed walkways and other information. And that evening, Acting Police Chief Scott Scheffler also took to social media to thank the community — an unusual step for what had been a generally close-mouthed police department...

Full story at <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-10-11/intense-ucla-policing-draws-scrutiny-as-security-chief-speaks-out-on-protests>.



admissions (502) athletics (471) CSU (387) transportation (373) UC-Davis (363) online education (336) ucrp (294) audio (287) UCOP (286) uc retirement (284) new hotel-conference center (282) UC enrollment (276) traffic (271) enrollment (248) UC-San Diego (234) community colleges (228) LAO (209) UC-Irvine (174) fund raising (160) UC-Santa Cruz (145) UC-Santa Barbara (144) UC-San Francisco (138) faculty center (136) controller (135) ballot propositions (132) UC-Riverside (129) CalPERS (120) faculty pay (102) Master Plan (101) UC-Merced (101) Yudof (89) UCRS retirement (60) parking (59) privatization (59) Faculty Association at UCLA (57) CalSTRS (50) UC Berkeley (33) copyright (29) campus climate survey (28) UCRS (21) Michigan Model (18) UC Merced (17) uc funding (16) State Contribution (14) UCOF (14) Regents (13) faculty recruitment (12) UC pay (7) graduate education (6) UC San Diego (5) UCPolitics (3) teaching evaluation (3) UC Irvine (2) UC Santa Cruz (2)

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2025 (2)
 - ▼ January (2)
 - The governor and the 4th quarter.
 - Our New Year's Day Offering

- 2024 (832)
- 2023 (828)
- 2022 (719)
- 2021 (710)
- 2020 (914)
- 2019 (671)
- 2018 (595)
- 2017 (666)
- 2016 (715)
- 2015 (765)
- 2014 (704)
- 2013 (776)
- 2012 (839)
- 2011 (738)
- 2010 (431)
- 2009 (12)

Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

City of Riverside Sues UC-Riverside/Regents Over Growth

The City of Riverside is suing UC-Riverside and the Regents over that campus's long range growth plan.

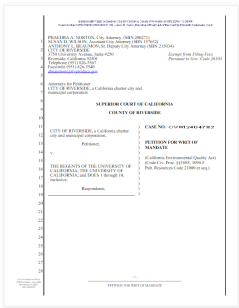
Essentially, the City complains that the environmental impact report approved by the Regents was inadequate. It faults the Regents for relying in part on an environmental report made by the City itself, which seems a little strange, but there you go.

Oddly, the student newspaper at Riverside seems not to have carried anything about the lawsuit.

Anyway, those interested can see the suit at:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/767900634/City-of-Riverside-vs-UC-regents-UC-Riverside>.

Similar town vs. gown frictions have occurred at UC-Santa Cruz. And, of course, there is People's Park at Berkeley.



Labels: UC Regents, UC-Berkeley, UC-Riverside, UC-Santa Cruz

Friday, October 11, 2024

Cyberattack on Internet Archive - Part 2 (Update)



The Australian Broadcasting Corp. has an update on the cyberattack on the Internet Archive which is still offline as of this morning. As we noted in our post yesterday, many of the links on this blog connect to the Internet Archive where we store such items as recordings of Regents meetings. Those links will remain inaccessible until the service is brought back online.

A targeted hack on the Internet Archive has threatened billions of archived web pages and a comprehensive digital history of the globe. The website remained offline on Friday after its founder confirmed a major cyber attack that also exposed millions of users' data. But what is it and why is it so important?

What is the Internet Archive?

The online archive of web pages, images, historical documents and books was originally set up in 1996 by Brewster Kahle, a US IT specialist. Based in San Francisco and set up as a nonprofit, the site operates a tool called the Wayback Machine which takes snapshots of web pages and saves them in the event they are altered or deleted. Professor George Buchanan, the deputy dean of RMIT's School of Computing Technologies, called it an "internet time machine" for its ability to show users things like what the White House website looked like in 1995 or other important historical records — a crucial resource for fact-checkers, researchers and journalists.

"The internet has no memory, there's no undo on that," Dr Buchanan said. "The whole point of the Internet Archive is to time-travel back," he continued, listing musical archives, knitting patterns and family genealogies as other ways people make use of the digital library.

What happened in the hack?

Mr Kahle, the Internet Archive's founder and digital librarian, acknowledged a series of distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks aimed at disrupting the archive's website and servers since Tuesday. The assault led to the "defacement of our website" and a breach of usernames, emails and passwords, he wrote on X on Wednesday.

In a new post hours later, Mr Kahle said the attackers had returned, knocking down both the Internet Archive's main site and its "Open Library," an open source catalogue of digitised books. The Internet Archive's data "has not been corrupted," he wrote in a subsequent post.

On Wednesday, users reported a pop-up message claiming the site had been hacked and the data of 31 million accounts breached. "Have you ever felt like the Internet Archive runs on sticks and is constantly on the verge of suffering a catastrophic security breach?" said the pop-up, apparently posted by the hackers. "It just happened. See 31 million of you on HIBP!" HIBP refers to site called "Have I been Pwned," a site that allows users to check whether their emails and passwords have been leaked in data breaches.

In another post on X, HIBP confirmed that 31 million records from the Internet Archive had been stolen, including email addresses, screen names and passwords. A hacker group called "SN_BLACKMETA" claimed responsibility, saying it had targeted the archive "because [it] belongs to the USA" and linked the attack to the US government's alliance and support of Israel. The Internet Archive is not owned by the US government and has no ties to Israel.

"They're probably doing it more for the shock value and visibility of the story," Dr Buchanan said.

What would it mean if the archive was gone?

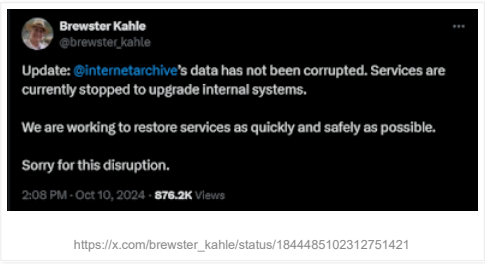
While most libraries operate digital archives that capture some of our online history, there are vast expanses of the internet that aren't otherwise recorded — except for the Internet Archive. "There's hundreds of things where for any of us those things won't matter, but there will be someone for whom it does matter," Dr Buchanan said. "It is very literally irreplaceable," he continued.







"The cost of running it every year is significant and there's no alternative available because of the technical expertise that's needed to develop that system." Digitised versions of local newspapers or crucial histories such as the early #MeToo movement's writers, who used blogs or Tumblr could also be lost if the Internet Archive's data was deleted, Dana McKay, the associate dean at RMIT's School of Computing Technologies, said.

For now, the archive remains offline with the Wayback Machine and Open Library inaccessible, but the site's operators said services would be restored "as quickly and safely as possible".

Users across social media were quick to mourn the service's disruption.

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-10-11/internet-archive-hacked-digital-history/104461930>.



Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:57 AM No comments:      

Labels: [miscellaneous](#)

Mind the Gap

An article appearing in [Nature.com/Scientific Reports](https://www.nature.com/scientificreports) describes an empirical study based on a "ten campus locations ... grouped in one public university system, which is a network of public universities operated and funded by a state. Ten campus locations within the university system share the same governance structure and operate under the same policy orientation including faculty hiring and promotion."* The pay of faculty in this system are available as public records. I can't imagine what university system that might be!






In any case, this unknown university system has a gender pay gap. It also has a pay system consisting of official pay scales for faculty who are also paid off-scale premiums above the official scales. I'm just guessing, of course, but I would wager that back in the day, faculty were actually paid mostly at the official scales but labor market pressures over time created the off-scale system. (Just a guess, of course, based on the history of UC which - who knows? - might conceivably actually be the unknown university system the authors studied.)

Anyway, the authors find "....that the gender pay gap in [off-scale] pay is not highly associated with such academic performance indicators based on productivity. In fact, we found that none of our variables helped explain the existing gender gap. This finding is consistent with the previous literature that the salary allotted outside of the pay grade system favors men regardless of one's academic position."

Put another way, the more the pay system deviates from the uniform official scales, the more it opens up the possibility of a gender pay gap.

===

*Kim, L., Hofstra, B. & Galvez, S.MN. A persistent gender pay gap among faculty in a public university system. [Sci Rep](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-72871-5) 14, 22212 (2024): <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-72871-5>. Thanks to Anand Bodapati for bring this article to the attention of yours truly.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 6:00 AM No comments:      

Labels: [diversity](#), [UC](#)

Thursday, October 10, 2024

Cyberattack on Internet Archive



There has been a series of cyberattacks on the Internet Archive where we store such things as recordings of Regents meetings and other items. It has been on and off line for the last several days. So some links may not work until service is restored. It is not known who is behind the attacks. Information can be found at <https://x.com/internetarchive>.







Update: [Newsweek](#) and other sources connect the attack to the current Middle East conflict:

A group linked to a pro-Palestinian hacktivist movement has launched a catastrophic cyberattack revealing the details of 31 million people, compromising their email addresses and screen names.

An account on X under the name SN_BlackMeta claimed responsibility for the attack on The Internet Archive, a nonprofit organization, and implied that further attacks were planned. The Internet Archive is known for its digital library and the Wayback Machine. SN_BlackMeta has previously been linked to an attack against a Middle Eastern financial institution earlier this year, and a security firm has linked it to a pro-Palestinian hacktivist movement...

SN_BlackMeta, who claimed responsibility for the attack, has previously been linked to other cyberattacks, including a record-breaking DDoS attack against a Middle Eastern financial institution earlier this year. The hacktivist group, who emerged in November 2023 and previously targeted the Internet Archive with a DDoS attack in May 2024, battered the Middle Eastern financial institute for six days with attacks using a new DDoS-for-hire service called InfraShutdown.

Full story at <https://www.newsweek.com/catastrophic-internet-archive-hack-hits-31-million-people-1966866>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:19 AM No comments:      

Labels: [miscellaneous](#)

But wait... There's more!









And, continuing the theme of our previous post - From [Inside Higher Ed](#):

The federal judge overseeing the massive antitrust lawsuit governing the compensation of college athletes on Monday preliminarily approved a settlement the players struck with the National Collegiate Athletic Association and several major

sports conference last summer.

...The NCAA made major concessions in that settlement to try to maintain its increasingly fragile ability to govern college athletics and whether and how players are compensated. Under the settlement, the NCAA and several major sports conferences agreed to pay \$2.8 billion in what is essentially "back pay" for use of athletes' names, images and likenesses since 2016. The deal would also create a revenue-sharing model going forward in which colleges that choose to participate would agree to distribute roughly a fifth of their annual revenue—roughly \$20 million each—to their players...

Full story at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2024/10/08/judge-preliminarily-approves-settlement-suit-athlete-pay>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 6:30 AM No comments:      

Labels: [athletics](#)

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